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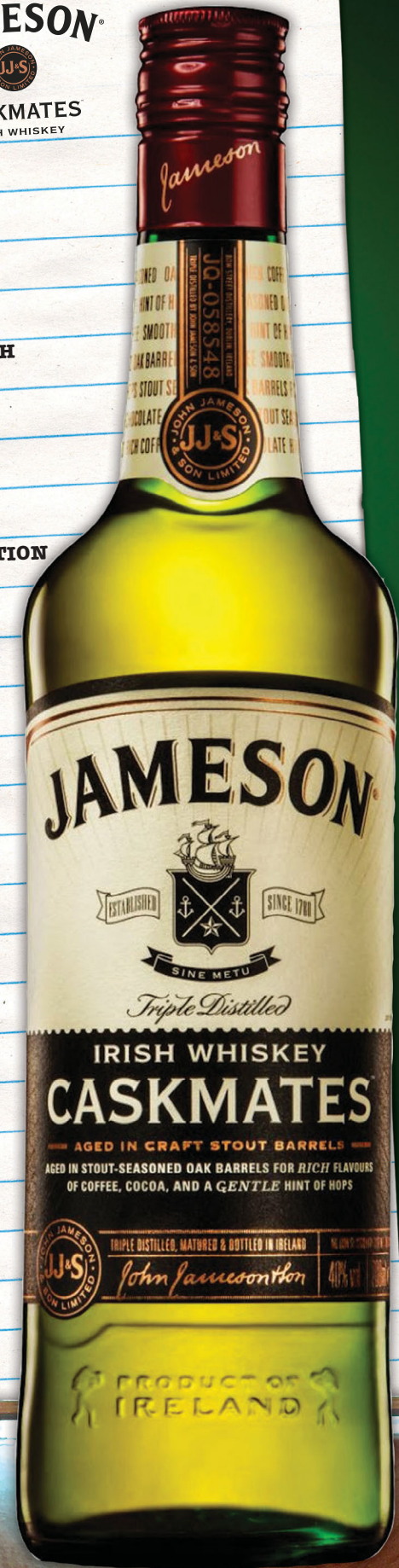
MOST ANNOYING THING ONE CAN DO TO GET YOUR ATTENTION FOR A DRINK?: Yell out "hey sweetie, babe, love, sweetheart," etc.

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19



39

9 FEATURE “THEN YOU HIT SOMEBODY”

Meet Alex Boone, the maniacal savage with a sensitive soul.
By Britt Robson

- 4
- NEWS
- THE SHORTLIST
- Pizzagate
- BLOTTER
- Duluth’s “Homeless Bill of Rights”
- MULLEN
- How to drive Minnesotan

- 19
- FOOD
- Q FANATIC
- Real-deal barbecue in Minnesota

- 23
- A-LIST
- 12 BARS OF CHRISTMAS
- Celebrate the season with booze in downtown Minneapolis

- 35
- FILM
- THINGS TO COME
- A woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown
- 37
- THEATER
- BLACK NATIVITY
- Penumbra brings the show back to its roots

- 39
- MUSIC
- THE YEAR IN QUOTES
- What musicians had to say to our writers in 2016

- 41
- CRITICS’ PICKS

- 42
- CLASSIFIEDS
- SAVAGE LOVE
- CROSSWORD

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THE SHORTLIST



Destroying a stadium:
The death of the
Metrodome in 20 photos.
citypages.com/slideshows

STEVEN COHEN

THE STAT SHEET

2,630

The number of refugees Minnesota took in during the 2016 fiscal year.

\$1,000

Federal stipend each refugee receives upon entering the United States. Additional financial support often comes from local churches and nonprofits.

50

Percent increase in child abuse reports received by the Minnesota Department of Human Services since 2014.

33

Percent increase in the number of Minnesota children in foster care since 2014.

“Give it time. We just need the uptight people to move to Ohio and Indiana.”

—Ben Curtis, responding to “Minnesota approves marijuana for PTSD; rejects insomnia, depression, other illnesses” on citypages.com

PIZZAGATE

COMET PING PONG is a pizza restaurant in Washington D.C. Or, if you’re a devoted follower of right-wing internet conspiracy theories, it’s a front for a pedophilia ring run by Hillary Clinton and her campaign aide John Podesta. That mind-bogglingly bonkers premise, dubbed #pizzagate, has been propagated online by a number of Hillary haters, from 4chan trolls to Michael Flynn Jr., the son of Donald Trump’s choice for national security adviser. It also struck a chord with 28-year-old Edgar M. Welch, who went to the restaurant to “self-investigate” the basement-level sex trafficking ring on Sunday, and wound up opening fire inside the restaurant. No one was injured and the suspect has been arrested. Said the owner, “We don’t even have a basement.”

POPULAR STORIES AT CITYPAGES.COM

Minneapolis-St. Paul has hundreds of local **WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES**. Here’s a list.

MACY’S gives the kiss of death to its downtown Minneapolis location

Ex-Gophers player, Wild prospect **NICK SEELER** delivers scary hockey fight knockout [VIDEO]

Twin Cities **ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP** wants to ban bonfires, AXE body spray, dryer sheets, saunas

’70S-ERA DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS comes to life in amazing footage from Hennepin Avenue [VIDEO]

HOMELESS NOT HOPELESS

Duluth's 'Homeless Bill of Rights' might finally come to life

In 2014, the same year 29 homeless people perished on the North Shore, the Duluth City Council said enough.

The city panel unanimously approved a bill calling for the creation of a Homeless Bill of Rights, seeking "the end of discrimination against the homeless, more affordable housing, and making it public policy that homelessness is not a crime."

The bill only stated these aspirations, without actually putting anything in place to make them reality, though homeless advocates up north said such initiatives had political support.

Former Duluth Mayor Don Ness left office in January, replaced by the city's first female chief political executive, Emily Larson. Now there's a movement to bring Duluth's Homeless Bill of Rights, which would be the first in the state, to fruition.

A coalition of nonprofits, businesses, and church groups have drafted 11 tenets,

which include explicitly legalizing the right "to rest in public spaces" and "to occupy a legally parked" car.

Later today, the bill of rights' proponents will rally outside Duluth City Hall. They'll then be given 45 minutes to make their case for the legislation before council members.

"There isn't much unique about homelessness in Duluth," says Joel Kilgour of the shelter/commune Loaves and Fishes. "Here, like many other places, there's been a criminalization of homelessness, from [policing] feeding people in public to sleeping on park benches too long. What's different in Duluth is we've got an affordable housing crunch and extreme weather. We're asking the city to move this forward."

It's estimated that Duluth's homeless population is around 1,000 people on any given night.

Kilgour is quick to point out that the



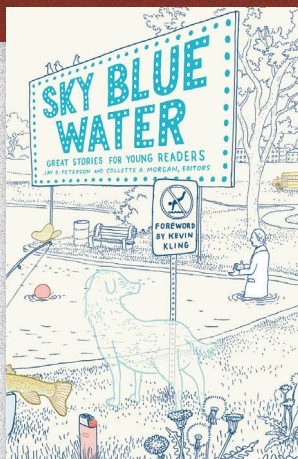
GLEN STUBBE, STAR TRIBUNE

The Duluth City Council unanimously endorsed the creation of the Homeless Bill of Rights in 2014. But the initiative has been in hibernation mode ever since.

law would be a beginning, not an end in and of itself. There might be potential conflicts with, say, allowing people to rest in public places and the city's "no camping" ordinance. He concedes there are plenty of details supporters, the city, and local police will have to hammer out before such

legislation could become law.

"Believe it or not, a major sticking point has been keeping our bathrooms open 24 hours," adds Kilgour. "Duluth, like a lot of other cities, doesn't have a lot of money, and keeping bathrooms open longer costs money." —CORY ZUROWSKI



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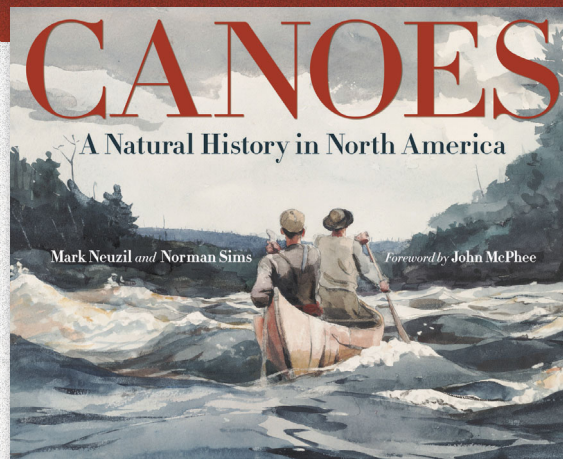
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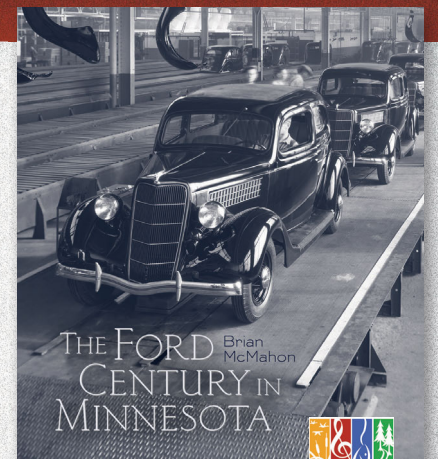
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The real Minnesota driver's test

Passing the test (and each other) in a passive-aggressive place



Mike Mullen

A recent story in the Minneapolis Star Tribune informed readers, “Minnesota has nation’s best drivers.” The paper’s subscribers were unable to read the full piece: Seeing that headline caused them to spit out so much coffee the rest of the story was rendered illegible.

What the researchers at carinsurancecomparison.com had actually found was that, with comparatively few instances of drunken driving, highway collisions, and driving without a seatbelt, Minnesotans are America’s safest drivers. Not the best.

Minnesotans have a number of — what’s a nice, Minnesota way to put this? — interesting quirks on the roadways. In light of this fact, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) should consider switching out the generic written test they make prospective drivers take, and start giving a more Minnesota-specific version.

Here are a few multiple-choice questions that will prepare teens and transplants to drive... well, Minnesotan.

1. The appropriate distance to follow another vehicle is

- a) 100 feet behind
- b) “Three seconds” behind
- c) Just far enough so you can finish reading this text and still hit the brakes
- d) Depends. Did he cut me off?

2. Two cars arrive at a four-way stop at the same moment. The driver who goes first is

- a) The driver to the right
- b) The driver to the left
- c) An asshole
- d) The third driver, who arrives four minutes later and wonders why drivers one and two are locked in a staring contest

3. When executing a turn, a driver should turn on the car’s blinker signal

- a) 100 feet before the intersection
- b) Every third time the driver makes a turn
- c) Surprise us!

4. The correct way to signal you intend to change lanes is

- a) Put on the corresponding turn signal
- b) Pump the brakes inexplicably
- c) Look around plaintively, searching the faces of the people around you like a lost kitten in a snowstorm
- d) Hover right on the dividing line between lanes as if threatening to take everyone with you in a fiery blaze
- e) All of the above

5. A driver in the lane next to you has signaled that he or she wants to change into your lane. The proper response is to

- a) Allow the vehicle to merge into your lane
- b) Determine the other driver’s exact rate of speed and match it precisely, staring unblinkingly at the horizon ahead, so the two cars travel side-by-side for miles
- c) Accelerate rapidly while screaming, “NOT ON MY WATCH, PAL!” a phrase that should, for safety, be repeated for the

next several minutes if there are children in the car

6. The safe distance to pass a bicyclist on a city street is

- a) Just far enough so he can’t sweat on your passenger side door
- b) Three inches
- c) Three millimeters
- d) There are bicyclists on city streets?

7. On the highway, the left lane is for:

- a) Passing
- b) “These crazy people!”
- c) Swerving to avoid deer or stuff that looks like deer, you swear you saw a pair of eyes looking at you from down in that ditch
- d) Driving exactly 2.6 mph over the speed limit

8. Minnesota does not require vehicle inspections, but drivers should still have their vehicles checked by a licensed auto mechanic

- a) Every 10,000 miles
- b) Every 36 years
- c) When you notice there’s a little more black smoke coming from the exhaust than usual
- d) When warming the car up on a winter day kills the neighbor’s dog

9. Parallel parking should be completed to place the car

- a) Within one foot of the curb
- b) With only one tire on the curb
- c) On Lyndale Avenue South right in the middle of goddamn rush hour

10. The zipper merge is

- a) A safe and efficient way to utilize the road before two lanes of traffic become one lane
- b) Just so rude!
- c) [Faints]
- d) Is that that new gay bar?

11. Which of the following are examples of “distracted driving”?

- a) Smiling and making eye contact with every single driver on the road just in case you know them or are somehow related
- b) Using the Tinder app while driving, but only if you’re looking before swiping right
- c) Eating leftover hot dish
- d) Closing your eyes for a couple seconds to hit the high notes on Prince’s “The Beautiful Ones”

12. When entering a stretch of 35W, a driver must cross several lanes of traffic in a short distance. He or she should

- a) Drive 22 mph
- b) Drive 122 mph
- c) Pray
- d) Curse the miserable bastards who thought you wanted to start every weekday of your adult life hating everyone in town. ☹

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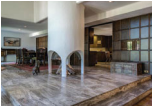
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COURTESY OF THE VIKINGS

MEET ALEX BOONE, ***THE MANIACAL SAVAGE WITH A SENSITIVE SOUL***

BY BRITT ROBSON

On Monday the adrenaline is still coursing through Alex Boone's body, enough that he doesn't really feel the damage — except for the fingers, jammed and stepped on to the point where his ongoing pet peeve is fools who want to shake his hand.

Tuesday is when it hits, when his body throbs like a tuning fork, and he immerses himself in a cold tub for as long as possible. “You feel like shit.”

Wednesday is time to move. The first half-hour of practice feels stiff and sore, but by the end Boone's mind and body are turning the corner.

Thursday and Friday he's timing his progress back to full speed, minus the remnants of the hip pointer, the various shoulder stingers, and that nasty concussion from a couple weeks back. They are distractions to be walled off.

On Saturday Boone pronounces himself 100 percent, his 6-8, 305-pound body gathering itself for the coming mayhem. For Sunday.

“People say I maybe take the games more seriously than I should,” he says, gripped in testimony. “I don't believe that. I believe it is a way of life.”

“The best way to feel on Sunday is so nervous that — I won't say scared — but you don't know what to expect. You feel like you



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BRUCE KLUCKHOHN

have to throw up, take a shit, and piss all at the same time, through-the-roof banana balls. It sounds like hell, but it is the most exciting experience of your life.

"My trainer always tells me to stay in the moment. His career was cut short and he reminds me that you never know when it is going to be over. So in pregame, I'll just stand there and take it all in, and that causes me to go even crazier. It's hard because there are so many things going through your head, but I try to think, 'I did it. I have earned the right to be here.'"

"Then you hit somebody, and somebody hits you, and everything calms down.... That first hit clears everything up. Then we can get down to playing like savages."

By the time kicker Blair Walsh shanked a field goal to end the Minnesota Vikings' 2015 season, coach Mike Zimmer was fed up with his offensive line. He fired offensive line coach Jeff Davidson and replaced him with Tony Sparano.

The 2008 NFL Coach of the Year when he held the head job in Miami, Sparano came with a reputation for promoting prototypical "tough guys" who never back down. It wasn't surprising that on the first day of free agency, the Vikings' splashiest move was landing Boone, a guard who had been with Sparano the previous season in San Francisco.

"I felt we needed an alpha in that room. That's Alex," Sparano says. "It doesn't matter the circumstances. He is upbeat and positive. He talks tough and plays tough and that's exactly what we wanted."

The terms of the contract, \$26.8 million over four years, with \$10 million guaranteed, made it the Vikings' largest free agent investment on offense. For Boone, an undrafted player who didn't make his NFL debut until the final game of his second season, it was sweet validation. He had clawed his way back after torpedoing

Profane, brutally honest, and acerbically funny, Boone is in constant rehearsal for the self-made role of gladiator with the barbed tongue and sensitive soul.

his career with alcohol.

Profane, brutally honest, acerbically funny, and seemingly in constant rehearsal for the self-made role of gladiator with the barbed tongue and sensitive soul, Boone immediately became a go-to quote machine on the Vikings media beat. His reputation was well established.

In previous seasons he'd stirred the yahoos by proclaiming he'd like to punch Green Bay linebacker Clay Matthews in the mouth, and opining that 49ers coach Jim Harbaugh, a man he loves dearly, is "clinically insane."

Within the first two weeks of this season, Boone called Colin Kaepernick's decision to take a knee during the national anthem "shameful," and said the fans at U.S. Bank Stadium who make noise when the offense is listening to the snap count need to "shut up," proving he can alienate folks across the political and social spectrum.

The side of Boone that doesn't delight in pushing people's buttons is more subtle, but crucial ballast for his more wanton and maniacal tendencies. Told that Sparano called him "the leader of that [locker] room," he replies, "I've always loved being an offensive lineman. You're the sheepdog; you protect the sheep from the wolves. There's honor in that. That's how you love this fucking brutal job, by being born to it. You're molded that way."

Boone grew up in Irish Catholic Lakewood, Ohio, a working-class suburb of Cleveland, with 150 bars and five churches packed in five square miles. Mother Amy remembers him as the perfect baby, always smiling and sleeping like a stone.



He was huge and funny. There was an “Alex rule” in flag football: He had to count to five before moving because he was so much bigger than everyone else. He used the time to play air guitar.

His parents divorced when he was six and older brother J.J. was eight. They moved in with Amy’s parents a door down the block. His father, Jim, left to work in California.

Alex’s grandmother Noreen grew up one of 13 children during the Depression. Amy earned her master’s and ascended to director of surgery at Euclid Hospital as a single mother raising two sons and a daughter, Julianna, born years later.

Alex intensified the yin and yang of his nature through two dominant relationships. Grandfather Richard was a devoutly religious accountant — the archbishop used to visit his home — who tutored Alex in math at the kitchen table, engaging the boy in conversation beyond his years about morality and ethics.

The yang relationship was with J.J., a notorious hellraiser and protector. “If anybody dared mess with Alex, J.J. would beat the tar out of him,” grandmother Noreen says, laughing.

“My brother was always my best friend and, except for my wife, he still is,” says Alex.

Growing up they were inseparable and,

when it came to sports, extremely competitive. Once, while playing H-O-R-S-E, Alex attempted a shot while jumping from the roof of the garage, breaking both feet.

Richard died the summer before Alex’s

HE WAS CLEANING CLOCKS ON AND OFF THE FOOTBALL FIELD, BOUTS INTERSECTED BY LITERALLY DOZENS OF BEERS AT A TIME.

freshman year of high school, a resonant event at an impressionable age. “He was my real dad. He taught me how to be a man,” Alex states.

About a decade after the divorce, Alex’s father made a concerted effort to reenter his sons’ lives, but it was too late.

“I had a lot of animosity toward Jim early in my life because he was never there and I know how that felt. He never said he was proud of me, never came to my games.

He came to the Michigan game my senior year and left at halftime. That fucking hurt. And he never told me he loved me, ever.... The example of my grandfather taught me how I wanted to be a good dad.”

Says Amy: “It always surprises people how sensitive and very emotional Alex can be. Like, he really loves creating handmade gifts, and if he doesn’t hear from you soon after you get it, it crushes him. You don’t expect that from a guy who is so tough and accountable and balls-to-the-wall as he is.”

Alex claims he always “felt shy, like my grandfather,” until he careened the other way as a high school and college football star.

A turning point came his sophomore year at St. Edward High, an Ohio Catholic powerhouse, when J.J. was becoming an All-State linebacker as a senior. In practice, Alex was called upon to block his brother. He used his size and nervous energy to wipe him out.

“I fucking trucked him!” says Alex. “The whole practice just stopped and went, ‘Holy shit!’ That was the day I came out of his shadow. I was much bigger but people had always still called me Little Boone. I became Big Boone right there.

“And what I remember is my brother going home and telling my mom he was

proud of me. Because more than anything I still wanted my brother to fucking love me.”

Alex’s size and athletic notoriety made it easy to hang with his brother’s friends. Given his personality, it’s no surprise he became an epic drinker who pushed the party to extremes.

Alex describes the “wild shit” that went down like a play-by-play announcer. Holes in walls. People going through those holes. Mere horseplay that escalated into brawls.

Through it all, Alex remembered Richard telling him that when things go wrong, people look to the biggest guy as the problem or the solution. Alex often decided the solution was to become other people’s problem.

He committed to Ohio State while still a sophomore, and eventually became one of the best offensive tackles in the storied program’s history. “He became an expert on using his hands when he blocked,” says offensive line coach Jim Bollman, now co-offensive coordinator at Michigan State. “I coached offensive line for 29 years and have training films teaching guys to block with their hands. Alex is a big part of those films.”

But the drinking got out of control. Motivated by 9/11, J.J. enlisted in the Marines and saw brutal combat in Fallujah. He came home scarred. “Alex may have been looking to me for guidance, but when I

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got back I was a lunatic," J.J. says.

By then, Alex had gotten his first DUI in Columbus. He was cleaning clocks on and off the football field, bouts intersected by literally dozens of beers at a time. OSU played for the national championship twice in Boone's college career. Bolland and head coach Jim Tressel brought Amy and other family members down to intervene with his drinking, to no avail.

"It was just an accumulation of me constantly being a dumb motherfucker," Boone says. "I constantly remember Jim Tressel and Jim Bollman and my family telling me to slow down. And I was like, 'Fuck that, I need to speed up. I want to get to the edge of the world, just close enough not to fall off.' But when I would drink, I would get angry at everybody, crazy fighting, chairs through windows. I was an agent of chaos. And I thought that was totally fair."

At a post-Super Bowl party three weeks before the NFL scouting combine in 2009, a soused Alex objected to a car being towed. He ended up shot twice with a stun gun and arrested.

It was cause for NFL teams to ignore him in the draft — a shock to Alex and his family, who figured his antics would knock him down to the middle or late rounds.

The league was right to disbelieve Boone's vows that he had his drinking under control. After the draft snub, he got into fisticuffs with an uncle at J.J.'s wedding. Besmirching his brother's treasured moment was the impetus for him to quit drinking.

That autumn, he signed with the practice squad of the San Francisco 49ers. Coach Mike Singletary told him one lapse and he would personally see to it that Boone was out of the league. He never once set foot on the field during a game that year.

He went home to Lakewood during the offseason and found two wellsprings of strength.

He met his wife, Dana, in a gambit cleverly arranged by his mother. "Not many people can say they chose the mother of their grandchildren," Amy Boone says proudly, explaining how she knew Alex would fall for the smart, funny lady in human resources at the hospital.

She set up a social occasion after work and asked Alex to swing by. After his mother convinced him Dana wasn't "out of his league," they embarked on a whirlwind courtship, and she found the gentle giant inside the outsized personality.

"Alex makes up a different story any time someone asks how we met," Dana says with a laugh. "He told the realtor that he rear-ended my car, we exchanged numbers, and the rest was history. He told my hairdresser we went out on date one and nine months later we had a son. He

sees if he can create an awkward moment. Alex loves awkward moments."

That same sense of goofy play makes him a magnet for children and a wonderful father. "The kids just come running when they see him and he's actually a really calming presence. Even when he's got film study to do, he'll ask if they want to come in and watch, be with him," Dana says. "On Friday he went into my son's school and read *The Monster Wears Underpants*. This huge guy had all these five-year-old kids rolling around with laughter."

**"IT WAS JUST AN
ACCUMULATION OF
ME CONSTANTLY
BEING A DUMB
MOTHERFUCKER."**

But as the kids keep coming — three in six years — there is a serious undertow to the loving family. "My wife has never seen me drink, which is one reason I know she will never see me drink," Alex says. "The same thing with my kids. I am proud to say that is something they will never see. It's just not worth it."

With his mind settled, Boone began working on his body. He solidified his relationship with LeCharles Bentley, who grew up in Cleveland and played at Ohio State.

Bentley was a Pro Bowl center with New Orleans before injuries suddenly derailed his career. In high school, Boone had lifted weights with him at a gym where all the tough-guy pro athletes congregated.

Now Bentley was starting a training program for offensive lineman. "Almost everybody I'd talked with who played with him told me that LeCharles was the meanest, nastiest motherfucker they'd ever seen," Boone raves. "I found we believed the same thing about football — that it is a privilege to be in the game, not a right."

They also shared a desire to stay away from alcohol. As Bentley taught Alex ways to train and tone his body, he also was giving him a center's perspective as the play-caller for line assignments, how on-field awareness could improve his play.

Told that Boone credits him with staying sober, Bentley brusquely demurs. "With Alex, it is all about channeling. He has an extremist approach to life. He *loves* his wife. He *loves* his children. Training, the same thing — his work ethic is off the charts."

After that first offseason with Bentley, a toned and sober Boone made the 49ers roster, escaping the practice squad. Even so, it wasn't until the second half of the



BEN MARGOT / ASSOCIATED PRESS

final regular season game that he actually got to play.

Bentley's tutelage and Boone's focus provided greater flexibility. He became a "swing" tackle in 2011, capable of playing on either side of the line. But one week before the 2012 training camp, the 49ers decided to make him a guard.

At first he was resistant: At 6-8, he was extraordinarily tall to be playing the interior, where the behemoth nose tackles and their low center of gravity held sway. But Bentley invoked a macho challenge, asking if he was badass enough to handle the smaller confines of the position.

"LeCharles looked at me and said, 'All you really need to know will take about two minutes. You are going from a lot of space to a little space. You'll find out whether you're a badass or you're not. You can either do it or you can't.' And he was right."

Alex grew to love it. It's "like a bar fight."

Consensus is that 2012 was his best season. Jim Harbaugh had taken over for Singletary and was a proponent of smash-mouth football. A hungry Boone seized the dangling carrot and slid in at right guard alongside three first-round picks and 34-year-old veteran center Jonathan Goodwin.

All five started all 16 regular season games, creating that synergistic teamwork that comes from intimate familiarity as a unit. The 49ers line graded near the top of most rating charts, propelling the team to the Super Bowl, where they lost to Baltimore. Pro Football Focus graded Boone as the third-best guard in the NFL, lauding him as a "secret superstar."

The plaudits didn't flow so freely after that, though Sparano maintains Boone has steadily improved. He has become a thinking man's savage within the pit where men violently collide.

He has become a thinking man's savage within the pit where men violently collide.

He'll watch cues from the safeties, which indicate coverages and give him clues to the pass rush or run alignment. But reality compels Boone to downplay the individual linemen in favor of the group. Along the line, the game is a blend of chess and melee, with adherence to assignments and a penchant for absorbing and meting out punishment almost equally important to the outcome of fluid situations that arise on every play.

The caprice of pro sports has been thrown into especially sharp relief with the Vikings offensive line this season. In training camp, the plan was to have a surfeit of veterans competing for spots. Along with Boone, Minnesota had signed tackle Andre Smith from Cincinnati, re-signed guard Mike Harris, had tackle Phil Loadholt and center John Sullivan returning from injuries, along with holdover starters Matt Kalil at left tackle, Joe Berger at center, and Brandon Fusco at guard.

Then Loadholt retired, Harris contracted a season-ending illness, and Sullivan was cut to save salary, all before the season. The rest began dropping like flies.

Kalil and Smith, the starting tackles, are out for the season. Jake Long, an emergency signing in October, tore his Achilles. In all, the Vikings have deployed 10 different offensive linemen this season, with the all-important tackle positions especially hard hit.

Add in injuries to quarterback Teddy Bridgewater and top rusher Adrian Peterson, and it's remarkable the offense was able to function enough for the Vikings to win their first five games.

Since then it has crumbled, with opponents stuffing the run and causing quarterback Sam Bradford to throw quick, short passes to avoid getting clobbered.



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Sparano thinks Boone has had an excellent season under the circumstances, but six losses in the past seven games make that a moot point.

Not surprisingly, Boone's best insights into his fellow linemen were conveyed near the peak of good feeling, when the 4-0 Vikings were readying to play Houston.

Boone had played beside left tackles Matt Kalil and T.J. Clemmings for two games apiece after Kalil suffered a hip injury that cost him the season. Asked to compare the two, he replied: "This is going to sound bad — it always does — but Matt takes more chances, more risks. If you want somebody to maul you, he's your guy. He's a killer. T.J. is more by-the-book; he knows what he is good at and sticks to it."

Boone prefers the Kalil method. "I enjoy the savagery and as long as I know what you are thinking I can make it work. Sometimes I screw T.J. up because I think more like Matt. T.J. is like, 'We'll get vertical and then use our hands.' But T.J., somewhere along the line we have to go kill somebody.... So I'm trying to get him to come over to the dark side a little bit."

The days of the single man-on-man matchups are over, lost in the stunts, gaps, and disguises of modern defense. Alex runs it down with elan, explaining the moves and countermoves. He's no longer the guy who marveled at Jonathan Goodwin's ability to decode secrets. He's now the guy who hangs most with 34-year-old center Jeff Berger. They speak the same intricate language.

Boone believes the more he knows about the intricacies, the freer he is to play with the controlled rage he prefers. You don't waste time thinking too much.

Boone's best attribute is using his height and breadth of arms. His weakness is getting low enough to dislodge the nose tackles at the epicenter of the pit.

"He has an extremist approach to life. He *loves* his wife. He *loves* his children. His work ethic is off the charts."

"If you enjoy playing through a lot of pain, having a lot of fun, swearing, talking shit, and just killing people out on the field, then this is for you. But one thing about the offensive line: At the end of the day, your weakness will always show. You can't ever fake something or you'll be exposed. You've got to be tough every single play. Which is why I love it."

On Halloween Night at Soldier Field in Chicago, Boone suffered the injury all players dread — a concussion.

It looked like an ordinary play. Boone pulled from his guard position and became the lead blocker on a power play off tackle. As he collided with 6-5, 330-pound defensive end Akiem Hicks, he turned his head slightly and was jolted.

He stayed in the game for another handful of plays until the Vikings were forced to punt. Coming off the field, he grabbed the hand of Berger, something he doesn't remember. Berger reported him to the trainer.

A woozy Boone was soon walking up the ramp to the locker room, one hand on the shoulder of a trainer, his other arm extended to the tunnel wall to keep his balance.

"I got a shoulder stinger on the same side; I felt the zing go down my arm and tingling into my hand," he remembers. But that wasn't the main damage.

"The truth is you know when you have a concussion. You're not all there. The night was iffy for me after that."

He repeated himself constantly on a call with his family after the game, but doesn't remember the conversation. The next day he awoke with a massive headache and

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uncontrollable emotions. He's had other concussions, but this was the worst.

"You feel like you're having an out-of-body experience and you're just not all there."

Then, catching himself in what might look to others like self-pity, he clarifies. "Look, there are different levels to being a man in this game. You get hit and it rattles you a little. That happens *all the time*. That's football. And we wouldn't play football just for the money — that wouldn't make sense. You have to really love this game to endure that shit.

"But then there are times you get hit and you know something's wrong. And that's when the dad in me and the husband in me has to come into play. It's funny, as I was getting the concussion protocol, I remembered what my son's doctor said to him recently at a checkup. She said, 'There is one thing we can't fix and that's the brain. So if you take a fall you have to catch yourself because if you hurt your brain there is nothing we can do.'

"And that doctor was right. So I thought, 'I'm not going to rush back. I don't want my kids and my wife having to clean up my drool when I'm 35.'"

Boone wound up missing one game. Dana says she and Alex have talked about how it takes longer for his body to recover as the years go by, but that he is determined to push through. There is always game day on the horizon.

The night before every game and right before he heads out on to the field, Alex calls LeCharles Bentley, who would do anything to be able to play again.

Bentley tells him to stay in the moment, to drink in his accomplishment. So Alex stands there, ready to vomit, shit, and piss, waiting.

On his right forearm is a tattoo that reads *No heroes, no leaders, no idols fallen*. It is in honor of J.J.'s nine friends killed in combat. On his other forearm are the words *Send me*, in honor of the biblical verse from Isaiah: *And then I heard the voice of the Lord say whom shall I send, who will go for us? And I said here I am, send me*.

On the other side of his right arm are the Four Horsemen, "because they are the only four crazy motherfuckers taking me off this earth."

Says Bentley: "What you see is what you get with Alex. You can either love him or hate him; I am in the boat of loving him."

"A lot of players truly aren't ready for this game — emotionally, physically, spiritually.... On any given snap this could be your last time playing football — worst-case scenario, your last time walking. A player has to accept that going in and then during the game forget about the danger in order to react properly.

"That takes a special kind of preparation walking across those lines onto the field. Alex understands that." 



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LUCY HAWTHORNE

BY MECCA BOS

The Atkins diet craze had some casualties.

Its large following in the early aughts, almost 10 percent of the American population, brought on a significant decline in the sale of carbs. Chef Charlie Johnson felt it. “People weren’t really interested in pizza and pasta anymore.”

Can you imagine? *People weren’t interested in pizza.*

Johnson has never lost interest. He’s the owner and operator of Q Fanatic, one of the top barbecue joints in the Twin Cities, yet every time I get to talking about brisket and smoke, we’re suddenly discussing mascarpone and gorgonzola.

“I made my own mascarpone for cheesecakes,” he reminisces. “It’s easier to buy it, but the cost differential if you make your own is enormous. I made all

my own pasta; I had organic everything.”

He also once paid \$150 just to get a recipe for fresh mozzarella. “I still have it. It’s a great book,” he says.

Italian cooking was “absolutely” his first love. It wasn’t until the Atkins craze that he turned to the meats. Atkins may taketh away, but it also giveth. After graduating with a prestigious Culinary Institute of America degree, and spending 20 years cooking in, running, and owning restaurants that made everything from burritos to Danish cuisine, Johnson finally landed in the realm of barbecue.

He opened what is now one of the most respected barbecue spots in the Twin Cities, way out in tiny Champlin, Minnesota. He also recently opened a second location in Minneapolis. And, he says, he learned the craft without conjuring a single puff of smoke: “I studied the history of barbecue on the internet.”

Sound implausible? Not so, says Johnson.

“People have written their college papers on the evolution of barbecue. You find out that the sauce first started in Scotland (if you don’t believe it, look it up on the internet); that Barbacoa, where the name ‘barbecue’ comes from, came from the Indians. You find out all about the regional varieties.”

These days he’s less inclined to turn to the web when he’s looking to boost his craft. Instead he goes on barbecue “junkets,” traveling the country to buy smokers, take classes from the masters, and of course eat lots and lots of meat. His five kids, though they all work for him in some capacity, have had quite enough of eating barbecue on their family vacations.

But all the traveling and research has paid off. He calls the barbecue he serves at Q Fanatic a “portfolio of the best that represents all the regions.” His fans seem to agree.

Q Fanatic

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It wasn’t always that way. When he converted an old pizzeria into the first Q Fanatic, he started with liquid smoke. “We had to use liquid smoke until I could afford a smoker. Then I drove to Wisconsin in my Geo Metro and took the back seats out so I could drive a chip smoker back. We did that until we could get our barbecue up to somewhat respectable.”

Now they’re serving extremely respectable versions of Texas-style brisket, Memphis dry-rub ribs, Kansas City-style sauces, and back ribs “to pacify people who grew up on them.” (That’s us Midwesterners, ya’ll.)

When I ask why barbecue seems to ignite people’s passion the way that it does,

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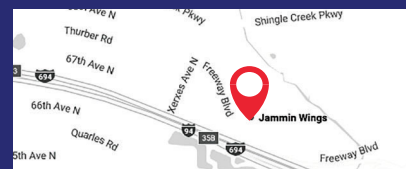
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LUCY HAWTHORNE

Johnson says simply, "Everybody thinks they can do it themselves."

Chances are they're not doing it like Q Fanatic does. Johnson's pulled pork starts with a 20-or-so-ingredient rub. Then it gets smoked in hickory until a smoke ring appears (the lipstick-red hue that builds on the outer carapace of smoked meat, an emblem of good barbecue). The bone pulls off and more rub gets mixed in, along with all of the fat from the meat.

Johnson likes to smoke with hickory because he says it's a happy medium. Fruit woods can be too aromatic, and you of course taste what you smell. "Mesquite is just too much."

Q Fanatic's meats are subtle, maybe even a little too subtle for lovers of heavily smoked barbecue. But subtlety is the mark of this classically trained chef, who cooked with open fire plenty before turning to barbecue, though back then it was veal chops and game hens instead of slab bacon and briskets.

The Texas-style brisket, heavily smoke-ringed and sliced in front of you (never falling apart beneath the knife, another mark of proper technique), is delicious enough to stand on its own without sauce, which is a Texas barbecue imperative.

Johnson turns to Memphis for the ribs. The rub is inspired by that of barbecue institution Charlie Vergos' Rendezvous, and by a rub Johnson used on his own spicy potatoes at another restaurant long ago.

This is the way Johnson cooks: by marrying his 30 years of accumulated kitchen wisdom with what he perceives to be the best of the best of what tradition has to offer. The slaw dressing is also borrowed from his vast culinary experience, and you can taste it. Bright and acidic, this slaw has a citrusy edge that makes it a

twinkling gem compared to the sloppy, dull slaws at lesser barbecue spots.

No individual dish is without similar, thoroughly considered processes. The smoked wings, like every other meat including the smoked slab bacon and maple ham, gets its own rub. It yields a cinnamon- and cane sugar-tinged char on the wings and drives Q Fanatic fans wild.

"We get yelled at if we run out," Johnson tells me.

How can you yell at a guy who left behind his true love simply to bring the people what they want?

And people do indeed want barbecue, which is on the rise in the Twin Cities, thanks in no small part to Johnson's trailblazing departure from marinara to pulled maple ham. As far as he's concerned, the more pitmasters the merrier. It pushes him to work harder and better, and he expects newcomers will be looking to him for inspiration — possibly even to replicate what he's already figured out.

Trend or no, Johnson says he has no desire to grow his business quickly. In barbecue especially, corner-cutting shows (look to Famous Dave's for an example of that phenomenon). "As soon as you get too big, you have to compromise."

You won't find anything in the way of compromise at Q Fanatic, from the impeccable cleanliness of the space to the exuberant friendliness and professionalism of the staff. Johnson's last compromise was leaving behind the pasta dough. Now he's into the meat for good, and his next move will involve a food truck.

When?

"I don't know," he says. "My crystal ball is broken."

One prediction we can make with certainty: Barbecue never, ever goes out of style. **CP**

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HOLIDAY GUIDE

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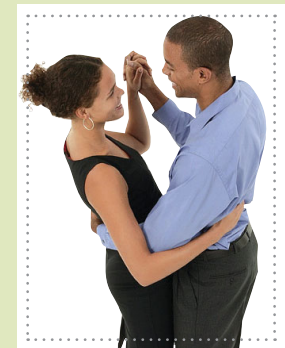
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A LIST

FRIDAY Art by Sean Smuda at Traffic Zone **P. 28**

SATURDAY Holiday bar crawls galore **P. 31**

TUESDAY *Fun Home* comes to the Orpheum **P. 33**

WEDNESDAY 12.7

COMEDY

COSTAKI ECONOMOPOULOS

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"Traveling around, telling jokes, and doing the football stuff in the season, that keeps me very busy," reports Costaki Economopoulos of his life and career these days. "It's crazy." The football "stuff" took hold a few years ago when he realized how much he was spending following pro football and managing his fantasy team. He figured he should write some jokes on the subject. That led to his *Quick Snaps* podcast and weekly appearances on dozens of radio stations during the NFL season. In his standup set, though, he won't do a lot of pigskin humor. "I'll maybe do 10 minutes of that," he explains. "The show is mostly about me and my crazy life and my kid and my wife — funny stories and things that bug me. I'm trying to be more personal, so the football stuff is kind of just fun for me, because I get to write jokes about how the kickers suck and whatever crazy thing happened that week. It's more observational joke writing, which is what I used to do in the old days. Now with being more personal, the football jokes are a nice respite for me." 18+. 8 p.m.

Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393.

Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON

THURSDAY 12.8

DANCE

KAREN SHERMAN: SOFT GOODS

WALKER ART CENTER

Karen Sherman's new work, *Soft Goods*, wrestles with the beauty, brutality, and complicated social dynamics of the creative production world and its culture. Her 20-some years as a choreographer, dancer, and stagehand have given her considerable insight into both worlds: dancers who are constantly exposed to scrutiny and

stage technicians who, hidden in the wings and isolated in booths, are meant to disappear. Sherman mines the tension between these professions, and the nuanced survival skills that dancers and technicians must cultivate in order to work together. She reveals the choreographic elegance of manual labor, and the vulnerability of dancers, who are often fetishized by audiences. A cast of 10 dancers and stage technicians, including Sherman herself as "The Choreographer," illuminates the focus and dedication inherent in both professions. If Sherman's previous work is any indication, there will be plenty of barbed humor and spectral beauty. 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. \$22. 1750 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-375-7600.

Through Saturday —LINDA SHAPIRO

PERFORMANCE

SNAP JUDGMENT

HISTORIC STATE THEATRE

Seven years ago, Glynn Washington was running a nonprofit in Berkeley, California. While he wasn't interested in being a broadcaster, he was a fan of public radio. "Some things I really loved about it," he explains, "and some things I thought they could do better." With that in mind, he entered the Public Radio Talent Quest. "That's like *American Idol* for public media." He won, and his show, *Snap Judgment*, launched on 20 NPR stations. Today, it is heard on over 400 public radio stations, and he frequently hosts live presentations of the program. "*Snap* live is kind of a version of what we do on the radio program but very different," Washington explains.

Most of the stories on the radio show are carefully crafted from extensive interviews. "We're trying to make their story a movie of the mind. Live, we invert that equation and have people who come out and rock a story. And they've got to be able to perform in front of thousands of people. We do it with a band. It's hot, it's electric, but it still has the same style and swagger as the radio show." 7 p.m. \$33.50-\$69. 805 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. —P.F. WILSON

PARTY

CITY PAGES COCKTAILIAN 2016

THE DEPOT

Now in its third year, Cocktailian is a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 ►



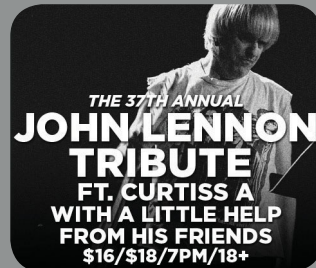
Rosalux opens its doors for a group show.

R.J. KERN, HAZEL

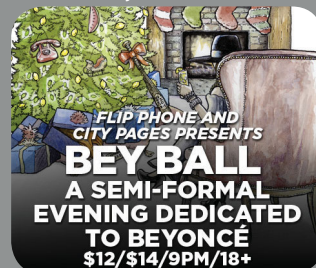
THE MAINROOM

BEST CONCERT VENUE, BEST CONCERT, BEST CONCERT (TOURING), BEST CLUB DJ - City Pages 2016

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23



SUNDAY, JANUARY 8



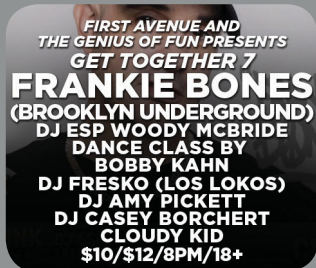
SATURDAY, JANUARY 21



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29



FRIDAY, JANUARY 13



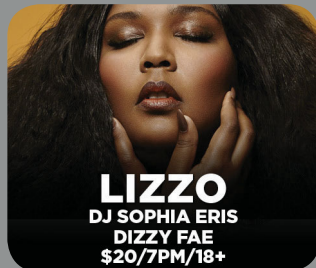
THURSDAY, JANUARY 26



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30



SATURDAY, JANUARY 14



MONDAY, JANUARY 30



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31



SUNDAY, JANUARY 15



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6



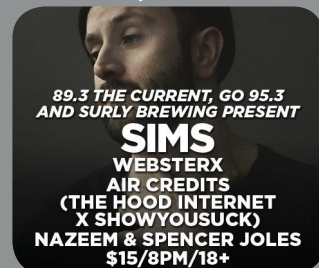
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17



FRIDAY, JANUARY 6



FRIDAY, JANUARY 20



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25



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- 3/03 & 04 LAKE STREET DIVE w/ JOEY DOSIK 18+
- 3/06 BLACK JOE LEWIS & THE HONEYBEARS 18+
- 3/10 MAC SABBATH WITH METALACHI - THE 2017 MOCKSTROSITY TOUR w/ OKILLY DOKILLY, METALLAGHER 18+
- 3/12 HIPPO CAMPUS ALL AGES
- 3/16 VINCE STAPLES: THE LIFE AQUATIC TOUR
w/ KILO KISH ALL AGES
- 3/18 PASSENGER ALL AGES
- 3/21 ANDREW MCMAHON IN THE WILDERNESS
w/ ATLAS GENIUS, NIGHT RIOTS 18+
- 3/23 RAILROAD EARTH - WINTER TOUR 2017 w/ BILLY STRINGS 18+
- 3/24 GALACTIC - WINTER TOUR w/ THE HIP ABDUCTION 18+
- 3/29 SON VOLT 18+
- 4/02 FOXYGEN 18+
- 4/17 THE ZOMBIES - 'ODESSEY AND ORACLE' 50TH ANNIVERSARY w/ DJ JAKE RUDH (TRANSMISSION) 18+
- 4/20 MAYDAY PARADE - A LESSON IN ROMANTICS 10TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR w/ KNUCKLE PUCK, MILESTONES 18+
- 5/03 TESTAMENT w/ SEPULTURA, PRONG 18+
- 5/21 BONOBO ALL AGES

7TH ST ENTRY

- 12/07 JAKE JONES AND FRIENDS
w/ BUFFALO FUZZ, WILD AGE, AND NATHAN WALKER 18+
- 12/08 SWEATER BEATS w/ STARRO, DIFFERENT SLEEP 18+
- 12/09 DUSTIN THOMAS w/ MAYA ELENA 18+
- 12/10 PAPER BIRD w/ MIKEY NIZE & THE RISE, GOOD MORNING BEDLAM 18+
- 12/11 THANK YOU SCIENTIST w/ MOON TOOTH, THE TEA CLUB 18+
- 12/12 KEEGAN WHITE w/ HAILEY WARD, THE SCOUTING REPORT 18+
- 12/13 J. PLAZA, NAZEEM & SPENCER JOLES, AND CREEPS & GEEKS 18+
- 12/14 JAYDEE BEAT BATCH WARS FT. 16 PRODUCERS BATTLING HEAD-TO-HEAD IN HONOR OF THE LATE, GREAT J DILLA 18+
- 12/15 THE SUNNY ERA 'SAVE YOURSELF FROM YOU' ALBUM RELEASE
w/ TABAH, THE SUDDEN LOVELYS 18+
- 12/16 CHALK, FALLING, STRAYA, AND EGO DEATH 18+
- 12/17 MIKE DREAMS 'PARDON MY VICES' RECORD RELEASE SHOW
w/ MUJA MESSIAH, DESTINY ROBERTS, DWYNELL ROLAND, JUICE LORD, HOSTED BY MR. PETER PARKER, AND DJ RICH LEE 18+

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- 12/08 DEAD HORSES w/ THE J.E. SUNDE GROUP 21+
- 12/10 MARTIN ZELLAR w/ BEN KYLE 21+
- 12/11 MELODIME w/ BEN LUBECK (FAREWELL MILWAUKEE) 21+
- 12/15 THE VIOLET RISE - ALBUM RELEASE SHOW
w/ DRED I DREAD, THE LONE CROWS 21+
- 12/16 LEONARD COHEN TRIBUTE
WITH MEAN LARRY (CLOWN LOUNGE) NO COVER/21+
- 12/16 IAN ALEXY AND THE DESERTERS - RECORD RELEASE SHOW
w/ THE FEDERALES, THE LOWLAND LAKERS, TEAGUE ALEXY 21+
- 12/17 FURY THINGS, BUTCHER'S UNION, TONY PEACHKA, AND 4TH CURTIS 21+
- 12/21 PLAY FOR CHOICE A BENEFIT FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD
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- 12/22 ALICE WETTERLUND AND GUY BRANUM 21+
- 12/23 TRAILER TRASH PRESENTS THE TRASHY LITTLE X-MAS SHOW 21+

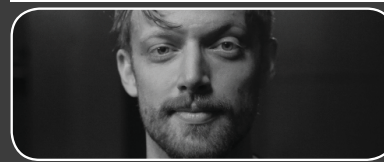
For show announcements, updates, set times, giveaways, and more:

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UPCOMING SHOWS AT OTHER VENUES



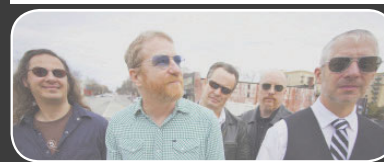
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14
HELMET
2016 DEAD TO THE WORLD US TOUR
w/ LOCAL H
at FINE LINE
\$20/\$25/\$35 RESERVED BALCONY
7PM/18+



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17
ASTRONAUTALIS
w/ FINDING NOVYON
at TRIPLE ROCK
\$15/8PM/18+



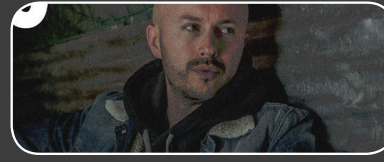
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31
City Pages presents
KING
w/ TINY DEATHS, K.RAYDIO,
DJ WILLIE SHU
at FINE LINE
\$20/\$25/\$50 RESERVED BALCONY
8PM/18+



FRIDAY, JANUARY 6
CRACKER AND
CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN
at FINE LINE
\$20/7:30PM/18+



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25
BEAR'S DEN
at FINE LINE
\$18/\$20/7PM/18+



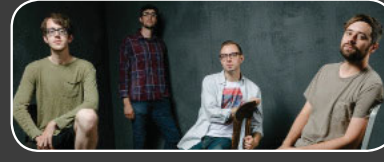
SATURDAY, JANUARY 28
WAX TAILOR
w/ L'ORANGE
at FINE LINE
\$15/\$18/8PM/18+



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3
First Avenue, Jam, and 89.3 The Current present
AN EVENING WITH DAWES
at STATE THEATRE
\$36/7PM/ALL AGES



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8
SAFETYSUIT
w/ ROYAL TEETH
at FINE LINE
\$20/\$35 RESERVED BALCONY
7PM/18+



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11
CLOUD NOTHINGS
at FINE LINE
\$16/\$18/\$30 RESERVED BALCONY
8PM/18+

- 2/14 RUN THE JEWELS - RUN THE WORLD TOUR
w/ THE GASLAMP KILLER, SPARK MASTER TAPE, CUZ at Myth Nightclub
- 2/17 AUSTRA w/ THE RANGE at Triple Rock
- 2/18 DEAD MAN WINTER w/ GLEN'S NEIGHBOR at Pizza Luce (Duluth, MN)
- 2/23 NOSLEEP PODCAST at The Cedar
- 2/25 PROF w/ FINDING NOVYON, METASOTA,
WILLIE WONKA at Clyde Iron Works (Duluth, MN)
- 3/01 LOS CAMPESINOS! w/ CRYING at Triple Rock
- 3/03 THE RADIO DEPT. w/ GERMANS at Triple Rock
- 3/05 DEVENDRA BANHART at Fine Line

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DEB LEE CARSON, PHOTO BY STEVEN LANG

CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

sampling party that showcases booze. Whether you prefer your beverage neat or done up fancy, you'll have plenty of options, as over 20 varieties will be offered here. That includes adored liquor makers like 11 Wells, Du Nord Distillery, and Tattersall, as well as (perhaps) lesser-known brands like Beet Spirits. Sip some whiskey, taste some vodka, or try a mixed drink. To keep you from getting too tipsy, local eateries Caffrey's Deli, Augustine's Bakery, Trout Air Tavern, the Happy Gnome, and others will be offering edibles. For tickets and more info, visit cocktailian.citypages.com. 21+. 7 to 10 p.m.; 6 p.m. VIP. \$30/\$35 at the door; \$50/\$55 VIP at the door. 225 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-375-1700. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

ART

SPIRIT: MADE HERE

CITY CENTER ATRIUM

This week, the Made Here project is refreshing its artwork collection with over 30 new pieces by 75-plus Minnesota artists. There will be fiber art, puppets, photography, light installations, and more displayed in windows throughout downtown Minneapolis' cultural district. Check out artwork from Paige Dansinger, Steven Lang, and Stephanie Glaros of Humans of Minneapolis. The seventh Made Here series kicks off this Thursday during 5 to 10 on Hennepin, a weekly happening featuring street performers, a market, live music, and food. Joan Vorderbruggen, who has tirelessly organized each event, will lead group walking tours at 6 and 7 p.m.

For a complete map of locations, visit MadeHereMN.org. Opening reception 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday, December 8. Free. 615 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis. **Through March 30, 2017** —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

DANCE

DANCE REVOLUTIONS

RARIG CENTER'S WHITING PROSCENIUM

Year after year the University of Minnesota's nationally acclaimed dance program turns out dancers who literally leap into major companies here and elsewhere. Part of their rigorous training includes working with nationally recognized dance makers who challenge them on every level, and who in turn get inspired by these students' energy, intelligence, and meticulously trained bodies. This year's program includes new works by Uruguay-born phenom Luciana Achugar and former Alvin Ailey dancer Marcus Jarrell Willis. Also on deck is the hyper-energized "Torrent" by Brian Brooks, labeled the "it boy" of contemporary American dance, whose company performance at Northrop in April includes the U of M dancers; and Minneapolis-based Rosy Simas, a Native American artist and activist. 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday; 2 p.m. Sunday. \$6-\$16. 330 21st Ave. S., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; 612-624-2345. **Through Sunday** —LINDA SHAPIRO

THEATER

THE NORWEGIANS

GRAIN BELT BREWERY WAREHOUSE

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 ►

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\$25 · 5:30PM DOORS · ALL AGES

TESTAMENT
WITH **SEPULTURA, PRONG**
FIRST AVENUE · 5/03/2017
\$25 · 6PM DOORS · 18+

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COLONY**
w/ COLBY KENT & THE
STOMPIN' GROUND
DEC. 15



**GREENROOM & RED BULL PRESENT
TRINA**
w/ PRINCESS NOKIA,
LEXII ALIJAI & DJ KEEZY
DEC. 16



**WHITE IRON
X-MAS SHOW**
w/ TEAGE ALEXEY, &
THE PLOTT HOUNDS
DEC. 23



**NEW YEAR
REGGAE
PARTY!**
w/ INNOCENT REGGAE
BAND & SOCAHOLIX
DEC. 30



**WOOKIEFOOT
NYE!**
w/ THAT 1 GUY
& HEATBOX
DEC. 31



**TIHIIIP & GREENROOM PRESENT
BLACK BEAR**
JAN. 4



MAYHEM
w/ INQUISITION
& BLACK ANVIL
JAN. 25

UPCOMING

12/9..... **Hed PE** w/ SEPTEMBER MOURNING, PIRANHA, & MORE!
12/10..... **SOLD OUT! Cody Jinks** w/ WARD DAVIS
12/14..... **LEOPRESENTS.COM For Today** - FAREWELL TOUR w/ NORMA JEAN
12/17..... **SOAP** w/ SLITT & SPACE MONSTER
12/22..... **Gramma's Boyfriend Holiday Circus** w/ DJ PRISM BREAKER
1/6..... **ONE - Metallica Tribute Band**
1/7..... **10,000 Days - Tribute to Tool** w/ GUERRILLA RADIO-RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
1/15..... **August Burns Red** MESSENGERS 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY TOUR
1/25..... **Mayhem** w/ INQUISITION, & BLACK ANVIL
1/26..... **The Cadillac Three: The Black Roses Tour**
1/28..... **LEOPRESENTS.COM The Suit** 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY TOUR
2/1..... **Talib Kweli** w/ STYLES P, & K'VALENTINE
2/3-2/4..... **25th Annual Songs of Freedom - BOB MARLEY REMEMBERED**
2/9..... **THE NOISE PRESENTS Pop Evil**
3/4..... **The Menzingers** w/ JEFF ROSENSTOCK, & ROZWELL KID

TICKET OUTLETS

THE JOINT BAR, ELECTRIC FETUS, DOWN IN THE VALLEY, DISCLAND,
KNOW NAME RECORDS, MILL CITY SOUND, ECLIPSE RECORDS, COWBOY JACKS - PLYMOUTH

A-LIST

CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

chance encounter between two women, Olive and Betty, who bond over talk of the ex-boyfriends who have cast them aside. Though the circumstances of their breakups differ, the women are unified not just by being scorned, but by being Southern transplants to Minnesota. Together, they gleefully trade barbed observations of local culture. Taking the notion of vengeance to a wickedly absurd degree, Betty soon suggests that Olive handle her ex-boyfriend the way she handled her own: by hiring two local hitmen to snuff him out. These proposed assassins, however, prove a surprisingly amiable pair, approaching each assignment with their humble Scandinavian work ethic. Riffing on cultural eccentricities and the principles of murder, playwright C. Denby Swanson's sharp dialogue should provide a source of offbeat humor underscored by the accomplished cast of Jane Froiland, Sara Marsh, Luverne Seifert, and James Rodriguez. Under the seasoned direction of Joel Sass, this local premiere by Dark & Stormy Productions (heralded as Best Theater of 2016 by City Pages) serves as a delightfully dark introduction to the winter theater season. For a full list of show dates and times, check the website, www.darkstormy.org. \$15-\$39. 77 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-929-4764. **Through December 30** —BRAD RICHASON

FRIDAY 12.9

PERFORMANCE

EMILY GASTINEAU: JUST AN ARGUMENT

FRESH OYSTERS
PERFORMANCE RESEARCH

In her solo *Just an Argument*, the prodigiously talented Emily Gastineau invites viewers to witness part or all of a four-hour performance. Gastineau, a nuanced thinker and bold performer who once danced until she threw up, has prepared for an ordeal that she says "measures the gap between hubris and humiliation, perfection and reality, language and embodiment." A dancer who can be simultaneously unpredictable, disarming, and alarming, Gastineau promises a mashup of unabashed ego and the erotics of vulnerability. Audience members should feel free to come and go as they please. 5 to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$10-\$20



OAKLEY TAPOLA

ART/GALLERY

5 SECONDS FLAT: NEW WORK BY OAKLEY TAPOLA

THE WHITE PAGE

Artist and zine-maker extraordinaire Oakley Tapola has returned from a residency in Turku, Finland, for a show at the White Page gallery that examines the layers of influence that make up a person's identity. By focusing on the bodily mechanisms that process the sensory messages around us, Tapola reveals the connections between tiny fragments of memory. Part fantasy, part scientific inquiry, part philosophical treatise, Tapola's meticulous and often chimerical work is on full display here. For the opening reception, music will be provided by tsotsoczek and Chopper Disco Rockin' Band, from 7 to 10 p.m. Friday, December 9. 3400 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis. **Through January 8, 2017** —SHEILA REGAN

suggested donation (cash only at the door). 512 E. 24th St., Minneapolis. **Through Saturday** —LINDA SHAPIRO

ART/GALLERY

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As if Sean Smuda's newest work — a densely referential print in which iconography, architecture, musical phrases, and scenes of violence (symbolized and realized) are layered in an almost kaleidoscopic tour de force of cultural history — weren't enough, the piece has a life far beyond its existence as a material object. *Universal Capital* has been

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 ►



STEPHEN NEIL

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25 CLOSED	26 CLOSED	NO COVER 27 WALTER CHANCELLOR POWER DUO A TWIN CITIES JAZZ ICON	\$5 28 THE MODERN SOVRANS SHANNON & HILLS ROCKABILLY SWING DANCE NIGHT DANCE LESSONS START AT 8PM	\$5 29 G'BEAU SOUL POP	30 MINNESOTA COUNTRY SALUTE CD PARTY DETAILS TO COME	\$15 31 E.L.n.O. V. FUN, HIGHLY DANCEABLE E.L.O. TRIBUTE BAND! ADVANCE TICKETS \$12

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The NASCAR of drawing is here.

KEELIE RITTER

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

deployed on the street as an element of political protest, and it has also been part of a performance featuring Smuda. Colonialism, consumerism, and capitalism are all here in a map that challenges as it enlightens. The opening reception on Friday, December 9, from 6 to 8 p.m. will include a dinner and performance featuring Smuda and Hijack (Arwen Wilder and Kristin Van Loon). Prepare to participate. 250 Third Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-204-0012. **Through January 20, 2017** —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

SATURDAY 12.10

ART

MIDWAY'S 9TH ANNUAL MONSTER DRAWING RALLY

GRAIN BELT BREWERY BOTTLING HOUSE
Monster Drawing Rally is an unusual benefit party. This year, 75 artists will create pieces of art live in three one-hour sessions at Grain Belt. Watch them work, peruse the wall of fresh art, and enjoy drinks from the cash bar and edibles from Potter's Pasties and Pies. See something you like? Take it home for a mere \$35. Proceeds from the event benefit Minneapolis gallery Midway Contemporary Art. 4 to 8 p.m. Free. 79 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-465-0234. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

BARHOPPING/HOLIDAY

12 BARS OF CHRISTMAS

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

The holidays are a stressful time. That's why it's important to blow off steam when you can. One such

opportunity comes this weekend at the 12 Bars of Christmas holiday crawl. We're going to recommend that you don't hit every destination, but those who pay for tickets score free admission to a variety of venues, plus drink specials priced \$3 to \$5. Whether you are looking for Jagerbombs, a vodka Red Bull, or just a nice beer on tap, you'll be able to find it cheaply. Locations include Kieran's, the Pourhouse, the Pint, and Brothers Bar & Grill (430 N. First Ave., Minneapolis), where folks can check in for a list of specials. Come in costume. 21+. Find tickets at xmascrawl.ticketbud.com/mn. Noon to 6 p.m. \$25-\$30. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

BIKES/HOLIDAY

KRAMPUS MINNEAPOLIS BIKE RIDE/SANTA CYCLE RAMPAGE

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Do you feel naughty or nice? If you are a winter biker, you have options this weekend. The Santa Cycle Rampage starts bright and early at 10 a.m. Folks will eat breakfast and pregame at Freehouse (701 N. Washington Ave., Minneapolis). From there, the festively dressed crew will ride to various brewpubs — including Surly, Dangerous Man, and Indeed — and eventually end the day at Fulton Brewery. Meanwhile, despite its name, the Krampus Minneapolis Bike Ride is really more nice than cruel. Cyclists will meet at 10 a.m. at One on One Bicycle Studio (117 Washington Ave. N., Minneapolis). From there,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33 ►

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#AtTheWalker

CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ►

they'll ride on to Kiddywampus to buy toys and then head over to the Wild Rumpus for book shopping. Next, Krampus and other creatures will cycle to People Serving People to drop off their purchases. At the after-party at Grumpy's, generous demons will reward themselves with pints of beer and tater tots. To donate or to ride, visit www.krampusworldorder.com. Both events are free. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

FOOD/HOLIDAY

4TH ANNUAL
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UNION DEPOT

This Saturday, bakers, chocolatiers, and other sweets purveyors will set up shop at the Union Depot for special sales, demonstrations, and sampling. Learn to make macarons with Nikkolette's Macarons, or lattice berry pies with Taste the Love Bakery. Other participating businesses include Honey & Rye Bakehouse, Groundswell Midway, the Buttered Tin, and Black Dog Cafe. The afternoon won't just be limited to sweets and carbs, however, as Double Take Salsa, Jamazing (a jam company), Blue Heron Soap Company, and others will also be on hand. Proceeds from the event benefit Merrick Community Services Food Shelf. Tickets and more info at www.uniondepot.org/event/holiday-bake-sale-2016. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$5-\$10; free for seniors and kids under 12. 214 E. Fourth St., St. Paul; 651-202-2700. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

ART/GALLERY

OPEN DOOR TWELVE

ROSALUX GALLERY

For 12 years, Rosalux has been granting exhibition space to artists outside of its collective to bring in fresh perspectives that invigorate not only the gallery's member artists but also its audiences. Andrea Carlson curated this year's show with an eye toward works with tactility, materiality, and texture. In other words, works you want to reach out and touch — but please do so only with your mind, heart, and eyes. Artists include R.J. Kern, whose digital prints evoke the painterliness of Old Masters, and Jake Zirbes, whose ecstatic paintings erupt from their surfaces. There will be an opening reception on Saturday, December 10, from 7 to 10 p.m. 1400 Van Buren St. NE, Minneapolis. **Through December 31** —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

TUESDAY 12.13

THEATER

FUN HOME

ORPHEUM THEATRE

Based on the critically acclaimed graphic memoir by Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* is centered on an adult struggling to make peace with her past, particularly regarding her frustratingly enigmatic father, a closeted gay man whose family suffered from his efforts to maintain a secret life. Energetically

adapted by Lisa Kron (book/lyrics) and Jeanine Tesori (music), this ambitious musical sets the action in multiple timeframes as the 43-year-old Alison pages through old journals to better recollect a tumultuous early childhood and an equally conflicted life as a college student grappling with her own sexual orientation. Driving the narrative are the celebrated musical numbers, which underscore the emotional nuances of the storyline with precision and poignancy. Directed by Sam Gold (who oversaw

both the off-Broadway and Broadway productions), *Fun Home* represents a stirring journey into the emotionally cluttered corridors of memory, where repressed recollections weigh upon the present and an elusive father continues to represent an enduring paradox. 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday; 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 2 p.m. Saturday; 1 and 6:30 p.m. Sunday. \$39-\$134. 910 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis. 800-859-7469. **Through December 18** —BRAD RICHASON

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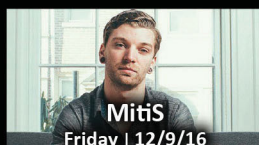
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DEATH AND TAXES

The morbid certainty of *Things to Come*



Isabelle Huppert
as Nathalie

PHOTO BY LUDOVIC BERGERY, COURTESY OF SUNDANCE SELECTS

BY MICHAEL NORDINE

The original French title of *Things to Come* is *L'Avenir*, which translates to “the future.”

The title appears onscreen in Mia Hansen-Løve’s newest film accompanied by an image of a graveyard, an early sign of what awaits us both during and after the movie.

Though not all doom and gloom, much of what follows is in keeping with that foreboding omen. Isabelle Huppert stars as Nathalie, a philosophy professor in Paris with a husband about to leave their marriage and a mother soon to leave this mortal coil. She handles both developments as well as can be expected, greeting this new chapter in the latter half of her life as both a kind of liberation and a leap into the unknown. As the existentialists were

quick to remind us, freedom is terrifying.

Every tossed-off remark and insistence that she’s doing okay seems both a deflection and an honest expression of how she thinks she feels. But someone as intelligent as she knows how to bury subtext in even the most perfunctory of statements. Reading between Nathalie’s lines can be as rewarding as poring over a Kierkegaard essay.

Things to Come is one of two films led by Huppert currently in limited release, the other being *Elle*. Long a luminary of world cinema, the French actress is quietly making a case for herself as a singular talent, this year in particular. As Nathalie, hers is a less overt performance than the one she delivers in Paul Verhoeven’s film, which begins with the rape of Huppert’s character and turns into a kind of thriller with pitch-black comic sensibilities.

Hansen-Løve, too, is a favorite in the arthouse world, and one whose low-key approach has never quite resonated with me. By most accounts this makes me a flawed person and may well say more about my sensibilities than those of the filmmaker, who was awarded the prestigious Silver Bear at this year’s Berlin Film Festival.

But if you, too, studied philosophy in college or simply spend a lot of time around academics prone to philosophical discussions, then perhaps you will also find characters sitting around and proclaiming their views to be the least compelling way to explore said ideas.

The film fares better when Nathalie isn’t arguing about how best to live one’s life but simply living hers. She goes to the movies (Abbas Kiarostami’s masterful *Certified Copy*), which leads to an unwanted advance; she has meetings

THINGS TO COME

directed by Mia Hansen-Løve
opens Friday, Uptown Theatre

about the newest edition of a textbook she’s written. Romance has failed her of late, but Nathalie’s intellectual pursuits have yet to slow down. “That’s reason enough to be happy,” she proclaims, and for a while we even believe her.

But her two children entering adulthood and leaving the family home complicates matters, as do an unwanted cat and frequent emergency phone calls from her ailing mother. There’s never a good time for any of this, of course, but Huppert is the very image of grace under fire as Nathalie juggles everything *la vie* throws at her. When one ball falls, though, the rest tend to follow. **C+**



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BACK TO BASICS

Black Nativity's simple setup has a big payoff



CAROLINE YANG

BY JAY GABLER

To see Penumbra Theatre's *Black Nativity* is to be shown how narrow the emotional range of most other seasonal shows is. Fuzzy nostalgia, quiet reverence, pure silliness, rarified exaltation — various holiday traditions hit different notes, while *Black Nativity* slides up and down the entire keyboard.

A deeply felt exploration of faith and grace, *Black Nativity* does for the Christmas story what a gospel song does for a melody: states it once, twice, three times, and then starts to work emphatic, increasingly animated variations. By the end, everyone's clapping and shouting and a little bit transformed.

Black Nativity was created by Langston Hughes in 1961, premiering Off-Broadway in New York. The simple play — a retelling of the biblical narrative of Christ's birth, with gospel songs chosen by Hughes — has evolved considerably over the years. Some elaborate productions have choirs of hundreds, with full casts of characters enacting the story.

Penumbra's version has also undergone changes since its premiere in 1987. The company has tried themed stagings in recent years, but the current production goes back to the basics, "as close to the original" as they can get, write co-artistic-directors Lou and Sarah Bellamy in a program note.

The Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church Choir of nine stand before an unvarnished wooden set piece: the outline of a church topped by a star that, in due time, blazes with light. Choir director

BLACK NATIVITY

Penumbra Theatre
270 N. Kent St., St. Paul
651-224-3180; through December 20

Yolande Bruce stands in front with two soloists, Greta Oglesby and Dennis W. Spears, and director Lou Bellamy narrates from a podium at stage right. A small, soulful, and tight four-piece band led by Sanford Moore crowds in at stage left.

The production unfolds as a series of gospel songs and carols framed by Hughes' text. Two dances, elegantly choreographed by Uri Sands, are performed by Taylor Collier and Randall Riley, who glow with energy and devotion.

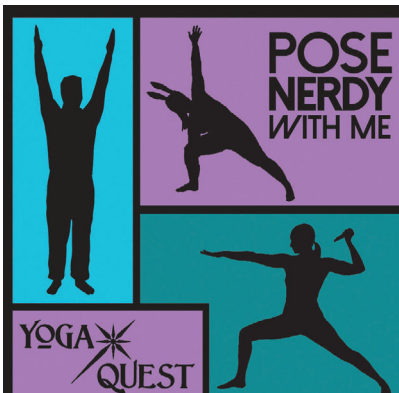
Oglesby brings tremendous force to songs like "Mary Had a Baby," and did so even Friday night, when her voice was ailing (other singers stepped up to take some of her parts). Bruce steps downstage to engage the crowd, and when she asks the faithful to come, they come. Spears brings a fleet-footed spark to his uptempo numbers and a haunting grace to quiet songs like "I Wonder as I Wander," which comes early and helps establish the show's gravity.

The narration begins as a straightforward retelling with language taken directly from the Bible, then develops into repetitions and rhyming verse that emphasizes the Good News while not neglecting the bad news. Pregnant with the son of God, Mary was turned away from the inn. In this African-American rendition, the parallel with unjust institutions of 1961 — and of today — is unmistakable. **C**



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TALKIN' TUNES

The 26 best quotes gathered by City Pages music writers in 2016

BY JAY BOLLER

“What is the price? To live, to succeed, whatever. What’s the price for a young black man’s life? What do I gotta do to live? Is there an actual number? Am I supposed to pay something? Is this a rhetorical question?” —**GREG GREASE** reflecting on the title of his Picked to Click-winning band ZULUZULUU’s debut album, *What’s the Price?*

“Doing the first print, and seeing the print come up in the developer, was seriously magic. It was like the waters parted before me. It changed everything — completely changed everything.” —**Photographer DANIEL CORRIGAN** reflecting ahead of the release for his October book, *Heyday*

“Sometimes [pursuing your passions] can make you feel like you are playing a game for your soul against all of your worst psychic demons on some kind of hellish basketball court.” —**MICHAEL VOLLER** of indie-rock band Chalk

“That place is just magical. The thing about art and music that’s a little mystical is that collective energy. That energy doesn’t all go away.” —**Drummer JT BATES** on the recently restored Pachyderm Studios in Cannon Falls, where Babes in Toyland, PJ Harvey, and Nirvana recorded in the ‘90s

“We were the epitome of lame. That’s really kind of the narrative of our band.” —**JOSHUA BURKETT**, Twin Cities-based former Christian-rock bandmate of viral presidential debate star Ken Bone

“Don’t try to define me.” —**Singer-songwriter HALEY BONAR**

“First impressions are everything in this business. And they started with a horrible first impression with the Brick and the Jane’s Addiction show. You’re trying to dig yourself out of a hole — at that point it’s a canyon.” —**CHRIS OLSON**, former general manager of Minneapolis concert venue Mill City Nights, which shuttered last month after four years in business

“Going out on tour, and living in a van and driving everywhere — that is not a very



“When you get me, you get what you see”: Lizzo

JEFF WHEELER/STAR TRIBUNE

common thing for people with disabilities because the accessibility is so poor. I want it to be more normal, so people can go out and pursue these dreams that they have.” —**Duluth musician GAELYNN LEA**, who won National Public Radio’s Tiny Desk Contest in March

“It’s also really good to remember that we’re in a room right now, talking about music. And that is both ridiculous and amazing. It’s so unnecessary, and so necessary.” —**JUSTIN VERNON**, mastermind of Eau Claire, Wisconsin band Bon Iver

“I bring my passions, anger, hopes, anxiety, and every other emotion to my art. It doesn’t bother me to be defined as a transgender musician, because that’s who I am. What bothers me is when people let out their own bigotry and accuse my friends of using me as a gimmick.” —**NATALIE GRACE KRUEGER**, frontwoman of punk band Naïve Sense

“He’s the eccentric ghost that haunts my mind in high heels and a black thong, chasing me down a smoky sewer ‘80s alleyway with a phallic Flying V guitar spraying confetti on me that only reminds me of my mortality.” —**L.A.-via-Minneapolis electro-sex artist TICKLE TORTURE** (aka Elliott Koziel) on Prince

“Why not Fargo? It’s cold half the time, I’m surrounded by elderly Christian Republicans, half the drugs suck, and there’s a cop on every block. It’s perfect. Take all these ingredients and throw them together, and you’ve got a recipe to inspire me to make loud, ugly shit.” —**Musician CHRIS HOFFMAN** (Professor Whiskers, Geyser Brain) on Fargo, North Dakota’s noise-rock scene

“Kurt always told me, ‘I don’t think any DJ is worth more than a thousand dollars.’ I always thought that was a good way to operate, keep things real.” —**Local DJ WOODY MCBRIDE** on booking Daft Punk’s first U.S. show in 1996 — for around \$700

“‘Got an ass like I’ve never seen’ ... Yes, that was weird. However, I did have an ass like he’d never seen. I was known for that back in the day, I’m sorry to say that.” —**MI-LING STONE POOLE**, Prince ex-girlfriend and the inspiration behind “Little Red Corvette”

“No. I’m not a developing artist. I’m not an artist they have to give a story to or paint a picture. When you get me, you get what you see.” —**Rapper/singer LIZZO** on whether she had concerns about creative control upon signing to Atlantic Records in March

“At the end of the day, I don’t give a fuck what

we get paid. I just went on a two-and-a-half-week vacation. Does Katie [Crutchfield] from Waxahatchee have a job? I think she does. And if she does, and the girls in Tacocat do, then we will all have jobs, forever.” —**Kitten Forever’s CORRIE HARRIGAN** on the financial realities of being a touring musician

“Beyoncé’s career arc reminds me of a presidency. The first year in office you have to play the game, then you build and build and build, and by the end you have your middle fingers up — you’re going for it.” —**R&B singer MINA MOORE-FOSTER** on the power of Beyoncé

“Honestly, we got a shit-load of Hamburger Helper. Before we even signed on there was a cart full of like every flavor. And they gave us these little hands for inspiration. I would see that hand at my place and it was like a reminder — ‘Don’t forget. Finish that song.’” —**DJ TIIIIIIIIIP** on making a viral hit song, “Feed the Streets,” with General Mills brand Hamburger Helper

“There’s a lot of pseudo-mythologizing about what can happen at [South by Southwest]. It’s over-the-top and kind of unrealistic. We’re just hoping to eat good food.” —**MAX KULICKE** of former Minnesota band Carroll on whether the annual Austin, Texas, music convention is still worthwhile for local acts

“Everything about the Replacements — all those myths and legends — the reality is: Some of it was true, some of it was instinctive, some of it was calculated, but all of it was true, you know what I mean?” —**Replacements biographer BOB MEHR** talking about his definitive ‘Mats bio, February’s *Trouble Boys*

“Man, every day’s busy when you’re as pretty as I am. You’ve got to remember, I’m already big. I’m bigger than anything you can imagine. This makes Taco Bell big because they got the best-known, most loved, charismatic personality in Minnesota to sell their product.” —**Beloved local pitchman “FANCY RAY” MCCLONEY** on his Super Bowl ad for Taco Bell’s Quesalupa that took place inside Treehouse Records

“The most shocking part was when [Hillary Clinton] came out and thanked everyone for coming out, then looked at us and said,

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MUSIC

'And thank you to General B and the Wiz.' So, if people are wondering if she is a smart candidate, she was able to remember one of the dumbest band names." —SETH DUIN of Twin Cities band General B and the Wiz, who played for free beer at a Hillary Clinton fundraiser in Iowa in January ☐

CRITICS' PICKS

TIM WARFIELD'S JAZZY CHRISTMAS

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If you think this might be a light jazz soirée to casually usher in the holidays, think again. Tenor/soprano saxophonist Tim Warfield is an accomplished player with a rich, distinctive tone, deep veins of blues and soul, an innate sense of swing, and a fervid imagination. Add a lineup that includes heavy hitters Stefon Harris on vibes and Cyrus Chestnut on piano, plus lesser-known standouts Clarence Penn (drums), Jason Palmer (trumpet), Eric Wheeler (bass), and Joanna Pascale (vocals), and you get traditional Christmas warmth wrapped in a context of smart, inventive jazz. Thursday's repertoire will be likely drawn from 2012's *Jazzy Christmas* album, on which Christmas standards like "Joy to the World" and "Silent Night" are launching pads for inspired improvis that probe deep into unexplored territory without losing sight of the mistletoe. 7 & 9 p.m. \$20-\$40. 1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-5299. —RICK MASON

LIZZO

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Though "rapper" is the word most frequently used to sum up Lizzo, she's truly uncategorizable, versatile and unconstrained like Missy Elliott and Azealia Banks. Originally from Detroit and Houston, she's been based in Minneapolis since 2011, and locals are happy to claim her as the city's brightest hope for the future. She's also the Twin Cities artist most recently signed to a major label, Atlantic Records, which issued her Ricky Reed-produced EP from October, *Coconut Oil*. The EP's clear highlight is "Good as Hell," the slick, joyous empowerment anthem that was her contribution to *Barbershop: The Next Cut*, and there's still a chance that the song will become a certified Billboard Hot 100 hit. Still, the remainder of the release, a 19-minute hook-fest, shouldn't be overlooked. Other standouts include "Phone," the minimal earworm that best showcases Lizzo's sense of humor, and "Deep," a sweeping, polychrome, and club-ready banger. With DJ Sophia Eris and 2016 City Pages Picked to Click finalist Dizzy Fae. 18+. 8 p.m. Saturday (sold out). 7 p.m. Sunday (\$20). 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —MICHAEL MADDEN


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Bounce Back

I'm out of my abusive relationship. What do I do now?



Dan Savage

I'm a 37-year-old gay man who just got out of an abusive relationship. We were together five years, moved to Portland together, got married three years ago. He suffered a traumatic injury earlier this year, which led to PTSD, which led to a nervous breakdown, which led to our savings being depleted, which led him to leave me in October. He moved back to the other side of the country, and I'm broke and on my own in a strange city. I saw your dirty film festival when it played here, and it made me realize something: At my age, I should still be enjoying myself and evolving sexually. Recently, I had a decent one-night stand. It was a drunken, stoned hot mess, but it got the job done. Still I can't help feeling like I'm starting over. Not just dating, but starting over with my sex life and my writing. My ex had me switch from LGBT media—which I am very good at—to copywriting, which sucks but is “steadier.” The point is: I want so much sexually, because I've been starved physically and psychologically, but I don't know where to begin. I feel like my marriage eviscerated me sexually. Not just the sex part of it, but the parts of my homosexuality that felt important to my personality, not just my turn-ons. Help.

GRIEVING AND YEARNING MAN ASKING NICELY

You're not too old to enjoy yourself and evolve sexually, GAYMAN—you're never too old for that. But it takes time to bounce back after a committed LTR ends traumatically. So don't rush yourself. But as soon as you can—sooner than perhaps feels right—you'll need to get out there. You'll need to actively and intentionally reconnect to your homosexuality and the ways in which it shaped and continues to inform your personality, your perspective, and your joy.

And now some random tips...

I'm not being look-ist or body-fascist here—this isn't about having the best torso on Grindr—but join a gym, GAYMAN. Or take up a sport that kicks your ass, cardio-wise. Forcing your body to outrun your brain is a good way to get back in touch with yourself physically, emotionally, and sexually. And exercising is good for us. It's a natural antidepressant. It gets blood

pumping into our extremities. (Your dick is an extremity.) And it gets us out of our heads. It also creates a social space, if you do it regularly, where you can make friends and connections without booze or drugs or the scourge of dance music.

If the gym isn't for you, ride a bike. If biking isn't for you, run. If running isn't for you, walk. Just get your ass moving.

Go volunteer somewhere, anywhere. Like someone once said, it's hard to feel sorry for yourself when you're making yourself useful. Go volunteer at the ACLU or Planned Parenthood, do some copywriting for an LGBT civil-rights organization, find out what orgs are working with immigrants in your community and ask them what kind of help they need.

Please don't succumb to meth or any of the other stupid drugs. Pot and alcohol—in moderation—aren't stupid drugs.

Reach out to friends you lost touch with over the last five years, apologize for letting these relationships go, and ask if they'd like to reconnect. Not all will, GAYMAN—some might be too angry to reconnect right now (you may hear from them later), some might not have any extra friendship bandwidth right now (ditto). Focus on friends who want to reconnect, and don't be bitter about friends who don't.

Masturbate. A lot. And don't use porn every single time—try using your imagination, flip through the ol' solodex. Be open to new experiences. Ask yourself where you've always wanted to go. Pick a big gay event you've always wanted to attend—gay days at Disneyland, International Mr. Leather in Chicago, the World Series of Beer Pong in Las Vegas—and start setting money aside so you'll have that trip to look forward to.

Good luck, GAYMAN.

And, speaking of HUMP!: My porny film festival's 2017 tour kicks off in January. For cities, info, and tickets, go to humpfilmfest.com.

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Follow Dan on Twitter: @fakedansavage
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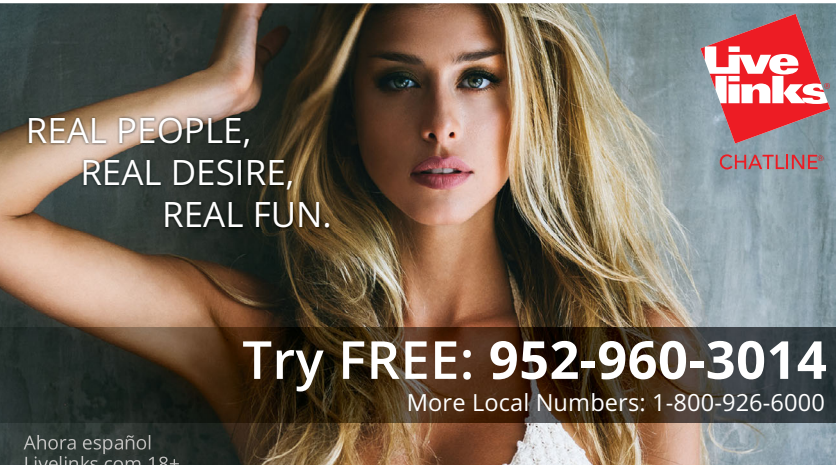


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